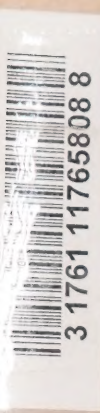


**Tradition , Cold Weather
and
Winter Employment**



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TRADITION, COLD WEATHER and WINTER EMPLOYMENT



DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR
CANADA
Milton F. Gregg, MINISTER
A. H. BROWN, DEPUTY MINISTER



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TRADITION, COLD WEATHER AND WINTER EMPLOYMENT



Hon. Milton F. Gregg
Minister of Labour

"Together, we can do much to stabilize employment on a year-round basis"

An unemployed person is a potential customer lost to someone. Unemployment affects all of us, because idle workers are not productive workers, and the loss in wages and purchasing power of those who are seasonally unemployed is felt by every one of us.

For Canada as a whole, employment reaches a peak around the beginning of September, holding at a fairly high level through the fall and then starts going down-hill. This decline continues until about April when, on average, the seasonal upturn begins.

What are the reasons for this annual decline in employment? The weather is an obvious answer, but it is not the only factor. Let me explain by using an example. Employment in retail trade reaches a peak at Christmas. Most of us do a lot of shopping at that time. This special shopping is primarily connected with Christmas and not with the weather. In other words, there are really two causes of seasonal unemployment. One is our climate and the other is our customs and traditions, like buying gifts at Christmas, or new clothes at Easter, or starting to build a new house in the spring.

A great many industries are affected by one or another of these two causes of seasonal unemployment. Canadian farmers cannot, with the best will in the world, plant wheat in February. Ice makes inland navigation impractical in winter, and salt water fishing is also affected. The canning industry must obviously operate largely in the summer and fall when fresh fruits and vegetables are available. On the other hand, logging, other than on the West Coast, is largely a winter industry for snow makes bush transportation easier and the spring thaw is depended upon to provide high water for the log drives.

The most serious result of seasonal unemployment is the waste of manpower involved. Man-hours not used can never be regained. It is estimated that there are 250,000 Canadians seasonally unemployed each winter even in years of generally high employment. And if the economy slows a little, their numbers increase and with it the loss in wages. It is impossible to assess the effect in dollars of reduced output during the winter months, but in lost wages alone the figure would be many millions.

Another important consideration is the annual cost of helping maintain workers and their families who lose their jobs during the winter. During the months of December, 1954 to April, 1955, almost \$162,000,000 were paid out in unemployment insurance benefits, a large part of it to those seasonally unemployed. In

addition, assistance to others who are unemployed is provided by provincial and municipal governments, welfare organizations and other agencies, and by individuals. The Canadian government has specifically recognized the problem of seasonal unemployment by the provision of "Seasonal Benefits" under the Unemployment Insurance program from January 1 to April 15 each year.

A recent survey by the National Employment Committee showed that many employers are alive to the problem and have developed a large number of different methods suited to promoting year-round employment for their workers. Such techniques include the diversification of products, stockpiling of raw materials and finished goods, the stabilization of seasonal consumer spending habits, the scheduling of repairs and alterations in the off-season, the transfer of employees between departments of the same business, the training of workers for jobs which are available at different seasons, and the granting of annual holidays in the slack season.

I recognize that the increasing of winter employment is not a simple matter, but requires ingenuity and the joint efforts of employers, workers, governments, and the consuming public. None of these groups can accomplish a great deal alone, but I am confident that together we can do much to stabilize employment on a year-round basis.



Mr. J. A. Calder
Past President, Canadian
Manufacturers' Association

"Every man who becomes unemployed ceases to employ some part of other men's time"

Unemployment, seasonal or otherwise, feeds on itself. It may start in a few restricted industries or localities, but it can quickly spread. Every man who becomes unemployed ceases to employ some part of other men's time. He no longer buys some things from shopkeepers, who buy from wholesalers, who buy from manufacturers, all of whom employ other men. He spends less on food, which affects employment in industries from farming to packing to retailing. The various causes for unemployment may be individual, but their effects are cumulative.

What part can the manufacturing industry play as its contribution to solution of the problem? First of all I want to make the point that the manufacturing industry as a whole contributes relatively little to the problem, and for that very reason may be able to contribute extensively to its solution.

Let me develop this idea. Although there are more Canadians employed in manufacturing than in agriculture, mining, fishing, public utilities and finance combined, the proportion of seasonal unemployment arising from the manufacturing industries is very much less than from many other occupations. Because varying conditions or climate have little effect on most manufacturing operations,

and because of the extent to which production is achieved by the use of highly-developed machinery, the manufacturing industry as a whole offers one of the most stable forms of employment and it is logical to say that increased manufacturing offers one of the most hopeful, long-range and permanent solutions to the problem of seasonal unemployment.

But how can the manufacturing industry be increased? There are several ways. In the first place our long-range aim in Canada should be to process much more than we do of the raw materials we now produce in abundance, principally at present for export in unmanufactured or only semi-manufactured form. Without jeopardizing existing export markets for our raw materials, we must seek and develop markets abroad for these and other materials in a partly or highly manufactured form so that when we are paid for our exports, we will also be paid for a high degree of Canadian labour and employment. Then we must develop a larger domestic market for our own manufactured products. For this the country needs more people and a steadfast, confident and greatly expanded immigration policy. A larger domestic market will permit increased volume of production with attendant lower costs and prices, making it possible for Canadian manufactured goods to compete with, and to replace, many of the manufactured articles which today we import.

There are some more immediate steps that the manufacturing industry can take to help in solution of the problem. Some or all of these things are already being done by certain companies or by certain industries. A company engaged in production of seasonal goods can seek and develop diversified lines which give rise to employment in the otherwise slack season. Where future market requirements can be estimated with a reasonable degree of accuracy, a fairly level production program based on a year's anticipated sales can be undertaken, though it may involve carrying higher inventories than normal at some periods of the year. With today's lower interest rates applicable to inventory financing, the somewhat added cost of carrying larger stocks at certain times may well be offset by a constant and so more efficient work force. Some goods that were once regarded as highly perishable and so could only be manufactured to satisfy immediate demand, can today, thanks to newly developed processes, improved chemical ingredients, better protective wrappings, or presently available means of refrigeration, be produced and stored for extended periods under both extremes of temperature without loss of quality. When new plants or extensions to existing ones are to be constructed, planning can be such that much of the work can be carried on in winter months, thus affording employment to people in the construction industry in their normally off season. I have only mentioned a few possibilities. There are others which can be thought out, and there are others already being applied in the manufacturing industry. I would earnestly request that manufacturers do all they possibly can along these lines.



Mr. J. G. Crean
President, Canadian Chamber
of Commerce

"A recurring annual waste of manpower and productive capacity"

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce endorses heartily the program enlisting the support of all segments of the Canadian economy in solving the problem of seasonal unemployment and pledges its cooperation. The Canadian Chamber composed of over 730 community Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce and including businesses large and small in all ten provinces, has recognized the problem of seasonal unemployment in its national program realizing that this kind of unemployment involves a recurring annual waste of manpower and productive capacity. The Chamber believes that a solution to seasonal unemployment is the collective responsibility of all citizens in Canada.



Mr. Walter Murray
President, Canadian Retail
Federation

"Unemployment in any industry tends to set up a chain reaction"

The first result of lack of work is lack of income. The unemployed person simply does not have the money with which to buy the things that he and his family need and which are made through the work of other people. Therefore, those things remain unsold, it becomes unnecessary to make more of them, and the people that have been engaged in making those products find that their efforts are no longer needed and they too are out of work. The circle broadens until those in all walks of life, in all kinds of endeavour, are affected. Unemployment in any industry tends to set up a chain reaction.

The original group affected may have suffered from restricted incomes for only a short period, but, very frequently, during that time, they have incurred liabilities for things that are really essential to their lives such as food and rent and these liabilities must be cleaned up from their earnings after they have again found work. Therefore, their future purchases of goods and services too are decreased and the effect of their unemployment extends beyond the period when they were out of work.

Elimination of seasonal unemployment would not merely spread the same amount of work over the whole year instead of just part of the year. On the

contrary, I believe, as do many others, that in reducing seasonal unemployment, which occurs mainly in winter, we will provide more jobs and more work for Canadians all year round. In short, by increasing off season earnings we should find that we have increased our total national income for the whole year.

Various business groups too—The Canadian Manufacturer's Association, The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Construction Association, and my own organization, the Canadian Retail Federation, have been studying the problem. The activities of these groups are making businessmen more conscious of the problem and their success in approaching a solution is already indicated by the fact that several retail companies have already revised renovation and building plans for stores and warehouses so that the work will be undertaken during the winter months.

In conclusion may I address a particular appeal to all of my listeners who are owners or managers of retail stores. You too can make an important contribution to this effort in two ways. First by planning repair, renovation, or maintenance jobs for the winter months. There are obvious advantages to you in that your stores are less active at that time and the disruption of business is less serious, and the work can be accomplished more quickly.

In addition you can make it easier and more interesting for your customers to shop at the beginning of the season by securing early delivery of your stocks so that selections for their inspection are complete at an early date. In this manner you can help your customer to purchase that Easter suit or fall coat and thus make certain that the work of making it or its replacement is provided for someone in the clothing industry.



Mrs. Enid Turner Bone
President, National Council of
Women of Canada

"By providing work during the winter season we are helping the community, and in the long run, helping ourselves as well."

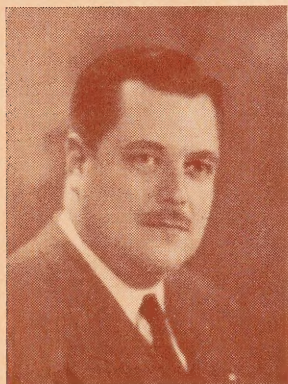
Seasonal unemployment is a problem that should be considered by all of us simply because it is a problem that affects all of us. When industry tapers off or shuts down for the winter season, people are thrown out of work, and because they cease, at least in part, to be buyers of goods and services, the whole community is affected.

Again this year, the Department of Labour and the Unemployment Insurance Commission are sponsoring a winter employment campaign with the slogan, "Why

Wait for Spring? Do It Now!" The National Council of Women of Canada is pleased to give its support to this program, which is aimed at winning the cooperation of all the segments of our society in an attack on the seasonal unemployment problem. Housewives have a very important part to play because of the

voice they have in the planning of household spending. Anything which involves getting work done in winter is helpful, especially when this applies to the building trades. Projects such as the building of kitchen cupboards, fixing up playrooms and rumpus rooms, interior decoration of all kinds, work on verandahs, porches and country cottages, are very much to the point.

I know that objections will be raised by some housewives to having this work done in the winter, but we should remember that there are advantages as well as disadvantages to doing such work during the winter months. The services of contractors and skilled workmen are easier to obtain during winter than they are during the busy summer season, and the same applies to the building supplies that will be needed. In addition to this, we should remember that by providing work during the winter season, we are helping the community, and in the long run, helping ourselves as well.



Mr. Claude Jodoin
President, Trades and Labor
Congress

"Our building trades workers are among those who suffer most from lay-offs during the winter months."

The Canadian Construction Association tells us that construction can be carried on during the winter just as well as in the other months of the year. Yet our building trades workers are among those who suffer most from lay-offs during the winter months.

I venture to say that very few households in Canada do not require some things done by way of repair, renovation, or what not, which will require the services of a tradesman. Why have we got into the habit that these things should not be attended to at any time except during the winter? Our own union members and working people generally throughout Canada can look about our own households and where it is needed have that job done in the wintertime. That will employ an idle brother tradesman, and also move materials off the shelves of local merchants. And that in turn will encourage further production and employment in the producing plants and factories of our country.

We can seek closer collaboration through our trades councils and federations of labor with local people and governments with a view to starting projects at times during the year, which will allow them to carry the work over into the hitherto slack months.



Mr. A. R. Mosher
President, Canadian Congress
of Labour

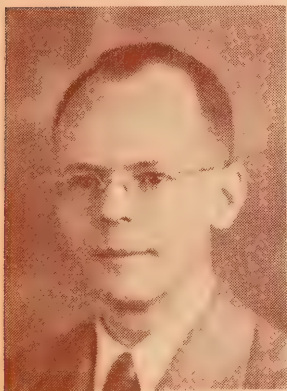
"If we are going to meet this problem we must do it on a cooperative basis and by careful planning."

If we are going to meet this problem we must do it on a cooperative basis and by careful planning. Such an approach requires action on the part of governments, industry and individuals—all of whom can, by carefully scheduling their purchases of both goods and services, help spread work over the 12-month period.

This is particularly true of the construction industry. There was a time when construction was practically at a standstill during the winter months. Now, with the development of new techniques, it has been

found possible to carry on a great deal of work during the colder months.

A step taken recently by my own organization, the Canadian Congress of Labour, is typical of what can be done. We had for some time been considering the construction of a new building here in Ottawa to house our national headquarters. We abandoned the old idea that spring is the time to start building and we instructed our contractor to begin work in January. That job provided work for some men during the winter months. We knew that any additional costs we faced as a result of winter conditions were more than overcome by the earlier occupancy we enjoyed.



Mr. Gerard Picard
President, Canadian and
Catholic Confederation
of Labour

"Our habits are responsible for a good part of seasonal unemployment."

We would be wrong to assume that winter alone is responsible for the slow-down in the building trades.

No doubt winter has something to do with the slow-down but other factors exist as well. Our habits are responsible for a good part of seasonal unemployment. Let me quote one case: the reluctance of people towards building or even repairing a house during winter. Though there are all kinds of modern techniques that make winter building possible, though contractors are quite ready to operate at any time still customers do not feel that winter is the time for it. Is it not only tradition that keeps citizens

from repairing, painting or mending the interior of their house during winter? The dull season following Christmas and New Year's is perfectly suitable for that kind of work and it has the enormous advantage of supplying work for the unemployed.



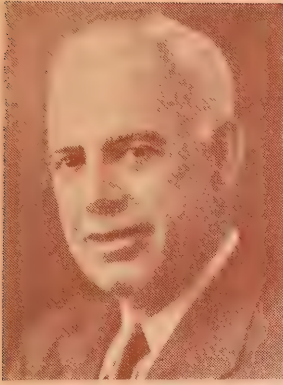
Mr. Raymond Brunet
Past President, Canadian
Construction Association

"Statements that wintertime construction is considerably more expensive are in many cases exaggerated and, in the light of modern techniques, outdated."

Although we have had a record year as far as volume of construction is concerned, there is an anomaly that we should all try to correct. The anomaly is that in September, which is the peak employment month in construction, there are 25 per cent more people employed than in February on construction work. In the old days it was natural to close the job around the first of November, at the first snow, and open it after the maple sugar was gathered. We didn't worry too much about our labour force because the good construction man in summer was the best bush worker in winter and everybody was happy. But conditions have changed and construction prosperity has brought into the industry people that are now making a permanent living out of construction and I think that it is our responsibility to try our best to assure these people normal employment throughout the year. The man who is our partner in the construction industry has a right to expect us to level off our employment peaks and valleys in the construction industry.

It is a big problem. Government on the highest level has invited us to discuss it with them and I think that the interest of government agencies and industrialists in timing their projects so as to provide more winter work is most encouraging and reflects the benefits to all interested parties—construction workers receive more employment; construction companies can plan more efficient operations when working on a year-round basis; manufacturers are relieved of storage and production problems related to seasonal purchases; owners occupy their buildings sooner and the government has fewer applications for unemployment insurance benefits.

Statements that wintertime construction is considerably more expensive are in many cases exaggerated and, in the light of modern techniques, out-dated. If buildings are "closed in" before winter, costs are usually comparable and may even be lower due to a better supply situation. Then again, any extra costs apply only to that portion of the work actually put in place during the cold weather and the owner may well be compensated by an earlier occupancy. Repair and maintenance work is usually carried out for homeowners and industrialists, because of custom, during the summer. Much of this work can be done in the winter months to great advantage. Basically, the spreading out of construction activity is a matter of timing and, in this regard, the cooperation of owners, architects and designing engineers is absolutely essential. By joint efforts, further advances can be made in overcoming the seasonal unemployment problem to the mutual benefit of all concerned. While we may not be able to solve the problem a hundred percent, with good will, imagination and the resourcefulness of the industry, we can certainly improve it.



Mr. Harry J. Long
President, National House
Builders Association

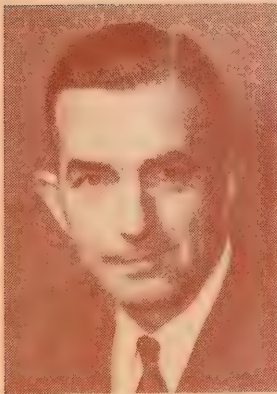
"The home building industry is keenly aware of the necessity for reducing seasonal unemployment."

The home building industry is keenly aware of the necessity for reducing seasonal unemployment.

In the past, many builders have endeavoured to keep their carpentry crews busy the year round. When bad weather starts, they move them indoors and put them to work making frames, stairs, cabinets and other items for use in next year's building season.

Another device, recently adopted, is the promotion of and participation in National Home Week. Held in September of each year, this nation-wide observ-

ance introduces new house models from which orders are taken by builders for delivery during winter months. This increases the number of dwellings enclosed in the fall, and helps to maintain employment at a time when the climate makes outdoor work erratic and expensive.



Mr. R. F. Legget
Director, Division of Building
Research, National Research
Council

"Not only is there no bogey about winter construction, but it has actually much to commend it."

I would like to assure you that Canadian builders have set an example to the world by their achievements in this special field. Builders in other countries look to Canada for knowledge of the very best practice in heavy winter construction. It is my hope that they will gradually come to do the same with regard to house building and other such vital smaller-scale work.

Twenty-six years ago, I was privileged to be engaged as engineer on a large construction job in northern Ontario, most of which was built during what proved to be a very severe winter. We placed seventy-five percent of all the concrete in that great dam and power house during freezing weather. We even placed concrete when the temperature was forty degrees below zero. And the dam is still in fine condition I know, since I went back to see it, twenty years after it was built. But that was a small job compared to such mammoth undertakings as the Shipshaw power project, for example, in Quebec. The techniques used, however, for

protecting work during the winter were just the same on both jobs. Did you know that the Shishaw project, which develops more than one million horsepower in a single power house, was constructed in about eighteen months—work going ahead without stop through one of the most severe winters which the province of Quebec has ever experienced.

The first requirement is naturally that we must know exactly what the weather is going to be during the time in which we have to build. Information about your local winter conditions can always be obtained from the nearest meteorological office and it is very much more reliable than the recollections of the oldest inhabitant.

It is essential to know when the winter may be expected to commence and how severe it is likely to be so that building work that is going to be done in the winter can be properly planned. I know that you'll tell me that it all sounds far too simple, but I can assure you that the whole secret of success with winter construction depends on the advance planning that is done. Plans must be prepared, for example, for the special clothing and protection that workers will require.

The necessary arrangements for temporary heating and the necessary supplies of fuel must be on the job before cold weather comes. You must be ready with proper arrangements for storing all the building materials that have to be kept inside, since they must be protected from the snow. The necessary materials for "closing in" the job (that means protecting it against wind in particular) must be ready and on the job when they are needed. Above all, the whole layout of the work must be neat and tidy so that everyone knows where everything is, in order to be ready for that day when you arrive on the job and find it covered with a blanket of snow.

An early heavy fall of snow can cover up so much so quickly. It is these heavy falls of snow that constitute the only real disadvantage on winter construction and this is much more than offset by the many advantages. You may think I am joking in saying this, but I am most serious. Just think—you are not bothered with rain, your equipment will not get bogged down in mud, all your access roads will be good and hard, you will have little if any difficulty in getting the materials you want, when you want them, and you are almost sure to have available the necessary labour for the various jobs that have to be done. Once the building is enclosed and protected against wind, the temporary heating inside it can give you even temperatures throughout the whole winter, and that is something you never get in summer in any part of Canada, or perhaps I'd better be careful and say not in Ottawa.

I do hope, therefore, that you will see that not only is there no bogey about winter construction but that it has actually much to commend it, provided that it is properly planned. I must emphasize this essential planning because there are two types of work that should not be done in freezing weather and it takes a little planning to arrange for this. The two exceptions are the excavation or backfilling of soil, and outside painting. You will all know that soil always contains some moisture so that when it is frozen it is very different material from what it is usually. Keep away, then, from all soil work in mid-winter and naturally leave your outside painting until the temperature is really warm.

EDMOND CLOUTIER, C.M.G., O.A., D.S.P.
QUEEN'S PRINTER AND CONTROLLER OF STATIONERY
OTTAWA, 1956.

